

# **Blue Green Algae Update**

## **9/14/05 Governing Board**



# Task Force Meets Weekly

- South Florida WMD
- St. Johns River WMD
- Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Department of Health
- Center For Disease Control

# Task Force Activities

- Coordinate monitoring programs
- Share technical information
- Coordinate public information
- Coordination with drinking water utilities

# District Web Page is "Live"

Blue-Green Algae Home - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by SFWMD


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SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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## Blue-Green Algae

*The facts on the floating phenomenon*

SFWMD Home  
Conditions & Forecasts  
Blue-Green Algae Home  
FAQs

### Blue-Green Algae

What is that neon green "stuff" we're seeing in lakes and waterways all over Florida? It's a variety of blue-green algae: a naturally occurring phenomenon that can be found around the world, not just in our backyard!

It grows when conditions are right: when nutrients such as phosphorus are in the water, and waters are warm and calm. That's why blue-green algae are most common in Florida in the summer, with its high temperatures and seemingly constant rainfall. When it's only present in small patches, you may not have noticed it.


#### Why So Much Now?

The hurricanes of 2004 churned up sediments in Lake Okeechobee that released a great deal of phosphorus into the water. Runoff of stormwater from our cities, farms and homes also adds nutrients to all of our waterways. And we're still in the middle of summer.

Blue-green algae growth can become seemingly explosive when lots of nutrients are present, providing a rich feast which can then cause "blooms" what may look like floating carpets of blue-green algae that turn the water green. Florida — along with Michigan, Oregon and Virginia — are currently experiencing massive algal blooms.

Some — not all — species of blue-green algae can produce toxins that can affect public health. Those blue-green algae that are known to produce toxins, do not always do so. Little is known about exactly what environmental conditions trigger toxin production.


The blooms in South Florida Water Management District waterways are caused by blue-green algae called *Microcystis*. These blue-green algae are not always toxic but can form toxic strains. The toxin — called microcystin — can be a threat to fish, pets, livestock, wild animals and humans if ingested or inhaled. However, information regarding toxins from blue-green algae and risks to humans, fish and wildlife is very limited.



September 12, 2005


#### Emergency Status

**Current Situation:** The District is now in **RECOVERY-EVALUATION PERIOD** for **HURRICANE Katrina**. [more >](#)



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3 Microsoft Office P... 3 Microsoft Office O... Blue-Green Algae Ho... Results of the District...

Internet 10:52 AM

# Toxicity Analysis Issues

- Unregulated parameter
- No lab certification program
- No standard procedures have been established for:
  - Sampling
  - Analysis
  - Reporting and evaluating data
- Method used is appropriate screening procedure to indicate presence of toxins

# District Monitoring Program

- 41 fixed stations
- Sample top 10-20 cm of water column
- Every two weeks
- First round of samples submitted to Green Water Labs
- Results received for samples taken 8/15 – 8/30

# Results of Toxicity Analysis Received to Date

- Caloosahatchee: 0.96 – 7.0 ppb
  - Kissimmee: 0.20 – 12.4 ppb
  - St. Lucie: 2.25 – 24.6 ppb
  - Lake Okeechobee: 1.53 – 65.5 ppb
- 
- World Health Organization guidance level for Drinking water is 1.0 ppb (lifetime exposure value)
  - No recreational exposure standards exist

# **District Lab Will Soon Be Capable of Toxicity Analysis**

- Currently running samples on test basis
- Developing Standard Operating Procedures
- Documenting SOPs
- District lab will be ready to take over the analysis after 10/1